THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. As per the Indian Telegraph Act, mobile services are not covered under Universal Service Obligation (USO), which is only for basic services. The year-wise details of the funds allocated and utilized in the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) are as under:—

Year	Fund allocated (Rupees in Crores)	Fund Utilized (Rupees in Crores)
2002-03	300.00	300.00
2003-04	200.00	200.00
2004-05	1314.585	1314.585
2005-06	1766.85	1766.85

(c) The Government has considered the issue of supporting infrastructure for providing cellular services in rural and remote areas of the country. To enable such support, the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 needs to be suitably amended. Consultations have been held with the Access Service Providers, Infrastructure Providers, Association of Telecom Service Providers and Manufacturers on this subject and comments have also been submitted by them in this regard. The proposal provides for subsidy for both active and passive infrastructure like tower, Base Transceiver Station (BTS), antennae and power supply.

Cost of money orders

2729. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plans to reduce the existing cost of money orders;

(b) if so, the steps proposed to make the system of money orders speedy, efficient and economical;

(c) the steps taken by Government during the last six months to make money orders commercially viable and attractive to the public;

(d) whether any tie-ups with banks has been mooted by the post offices; and

(e) if so, the details of the steps proposed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The Department is transmitting money orders through the Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) between 150 Satellite Money Order Stations (SMOs) which are also linked to 1485 Extended Satellite Money Order Stations (ESMOs). All post offices booking and delivering money orders are linked to SMO or ESMO.

(c) The Money Order tariff was last revised on 11.6.1990. The tariff is reasonable and the service has been used by nearly 12 crore customers in 2004-05. The Senior Citizens Savings Scheme Customer has been offered the service of quarterly interest payment upto limit of MO at home.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise in view of (d) above.

Participation of foreign mobile companies

†2730. SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards increasing participation of domestic mobile companies with the foreign mobile companies;

(b) if so, the names of those companies which have a participation with the foreign companies;

(c) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards direct or indirect danger to the country's security due to increasing participation of foreign companies; and

(d) if so, the preventive steps being taken in this regard?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.